

## Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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ANKARA FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: NATO, MNUC

SUBJECT: PINCUS AND BURT ARTICLES ON ERW

1. FOLLOWING ARE TEXTS OF ARTICLES BY WALTER PINCUS  
AND RICHARD BURT ON ENHANCED RADIATION WEAPONS WHICH  
APPEARED IN MARCH 28 EDITIONS OF THE WASHINGTON POST  
AND THE NEW YORK TIMES RESPECTIVELY. PLEASE PASS  
URGENTLY TO DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER.

2. BEGIN TEXT(UNCLASSIFIED): ,U.S. PULLS BACK FROM  
NATO NEUTRON WEAPONS DISCUSSIONS" BY WALTER PINCUS.

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THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION ABRUPTLY CHANGED COURSE  
LAST WEEK AND CALLED OFF NEGOTIATIONS IN BRUSSELS WITH  
ITS EUROPEAN NATO ALLIES SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO  
COURT THEIR PUBLIC SUPPORT OF US PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON  
ARTILLERY SHELLS AND MISSILE WARHEADS.

ALLIED GOVERNMENTS, ON WHOSE SOIL THE NEUTRON WEAPONS  
WOULD BE DEPLOYED, HAVE BEEN SKITTISH ABOUT GIVING  
OPEN BACKING TO THE CONTROVERSIAL NEW GENERATION OF  
TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS BECAUSE OF POLITICAL OPPOSITION

TO THEM THAT HAS DEVELOPED WITHIN THEIR COUNTRIES.

PRESIDENT CARTER HAS MADE IT CLEAR UP TO NOW THAT HE WOULD NOT ORDER PRODUCTION UNLESS HE COULD COUNT ON PUBLIC NATO GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF HIS DECISION.

ALTHOUGH SOME ADMINISTRATION SOURCES MAINTAINED YESTERDAY THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT YET MADE HIS FINAL GO-AHEAD DECISION, THE TALKS WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER WAY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS WERE BASED ON A PRELIMINARY WHITE HOUSE DETERMINATION THAT A PRODUCTION ORDER WOULD BE MADE BY MID-APRIL.

"THAT DECISION HAD BEEN MADE SOME TIME AGO," ONE SOURCE SAID YESTERDAY, "BUT NOW WE ARE IN A HOLDING PATTERN."

A FEW GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS INTERPRETED THE TALKS' CANCELLATION LAST WEEK AS A SIGN THE PRESIDENT HAS REVERSED HIMSELF AND IS NOW LEANING AGAINST A NEUTRON GO-AHEAD. OTHERS, HOWEVER, SAID CARTER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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HAS ONLY MADE "A DECISION TO DELAY THE DECISION," IN THE WORDS OF ONE.

NUCLEAR SHELLS AND WARHEADS NOW DEPLOYED IN EUROPE DESTROY TARGETS SUCH AS TANKS AND FORTIFICATIONS PRIMARILY THROUGH HEAT AND BLAST.

PROPOSED NEUTRON 8-INCH ARTILLERY SHELLS AND LANCE MISSILE WARHEADS, ON THE OTHER HAND, CUT DOWN BLAST AND HEAT AND ARE DESIGNED TO KILL OR INCAPACITATE ENEMY TROOPS PRIMARILY BY RADIATION.

PROONENTS OF THE WEAPONS SAY THEY WOULD BE MORE CREDIBLE DETERRENTS IN EUROPE THAN THOSE NOW DEPLOYED BECAUSE THEY WOULD CAUSE LESS COLLATERAL DAMAGE TO TOWNS AND CITIES ADJACENT TO BATTLEFIELDS.

OPPONENTS ARGUE THE NEW WEAPONS WOULD LOWER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD SINCE BATTLEFIELD COMMANDERS WOULD ASK TO BE ABLE TO EMPLOY THEM EARLIER THAN THEY WOULD THE MORE DESTRUCTIVE NUCLEAR ARTILLERY AND MISSILES.

THE ULTIMATE DECISON TO USE ANY NUCLEAR WEAPON RESTS WITH THE PRESIDENT.

THERE WAS SOME CONSTERNATION AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT BECAUSE OF THE SUDDEN WHITE HOUSE DECISION LAST WEEK

TO PULL BACK FROM THE NEUTRON PRODUCTION DISCUSSIONS.

A GREAT DEAL OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORT HAD GONE INTO  
MOVING WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT AND  
BRITISH PRIME MINISTER JAMES CALLAGHAN CLOSER TO  
SPEAKING OUT IN SUPPORT OF PRODUCTION.

ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, A HIGH LEVEL CARTER AIDE  
WILL GO TO EUROPE SOON TO EXPLAIN THE PRESIDENT'S  
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NEW COURSE.

TO DATE, NO WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY HAS APPROVED  
THE NEUTRON WEAPONS. THE NETHERLANDS, THE ONLY  
COUNTRY WHOSE PARLIAMENT VOTED ON THE ISSUE, RECENTLY  
TURNED THEM DOWN.

THE SOVIET UNION, MEANWHILE, HAS TRIED TO MAKE THE  
PROPOSED BUILDING OF NEUTRON WEAPONS BY THE UNITED  
STATES AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE. THIS CAMPAIGN,  
PICKED UP BY COMMUNIST PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPEAN  
COUNTRIES, HAS ADDED TO THE PROBLEMS OF NATO  
POLITICAL LEADERS.

BECAUSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL CONTROVERSY  
THAT HAS DEVELOPED AROUND NEUTRON WEAPONS AND THE  
PRESIDENT'S SEVEN-MONTH DELAY IN MAKING HIS PROMISED  
PRODUCTION DECISION, WHITE HOUSE AND OTHER GOVERNMENT  
OFFICIALS ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ABOUT DISCUSSING  
THE MATTER. YESTERDAY, FOR EXAMPLE, OFFICIALS  
REPEATEDLY REQUESTED DURING INTERVIEWS THAT THEY NOT  
BE QUOTED BY NAME OR EVEN AGENCY.

THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS ON HOW LONG THE CURRENT "HOLDING  
PATTERN" WOULD HOLD.

"IT MIGHT BE TWO WEEKS, A MONTH OR LONGER," ONE  
OFFICIAL CLOSE TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS SAID.

ANOTHER SUGGESTED MEETINGS WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT  
WILL TAKE UP "OTHER OPTIONS. WE MAY GO AHEAD WITH  
PRODUCTION WITHOUT THE ALLIES' SUPPORT."

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UP TO NOW THAT COURSE HAS BEEN AVOIDED FOR SEVERAL  
REASONS.

ONE IS THAT CONGRESS BYLAW HAS 45 DAYS TO VOTE BY JOINT RESOLUTION TO OVERTURN A DECISION TO BUILD THE WEAPONS.

OPPONENTS ON CAPITOL HILL COULD MAKE USE OF ALLIED FAILURE TO SUPPORT THE PRESIDENT AS A SIGN THAT CONGRESS SHOULD TURN AGAINST THE WEAPONS.

CARTER ALSO IS SAID TO WANT NATO SUPPORT BECAUSE OF THE UPCOMING UNITED NATIONS DEBATE ON DISARMAMENT, WHERE THE SOVIETS ARE BOUND TO CRITICIZE A MOVE TO NEUTRON SHELLS. THE PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY DOES NOT WANT TO STAND ALONE AMONG WORLD LEADERS IN FAVOR OF BUILDING NEUTRON WEAPONS. END TEXT.

3. BEGIN TEXT (UNCLASSIFIED): "NATO AGREEMENT ON NEUTRON BOMB EXPECTED SOON" BY RICHARD BURT.

WASHINGTON, MARCH 27 -- HIGH-RANKING CARTER ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAID TODAY THAT THE WESTERN ALLIANCE WOULD SOON AGREE TO A PLAN THAT COULD ENABLE THE UNITED STATES TO BEGIN PRODUCING THE CONTROVERSIAL NEUTRON BOMB LATER THIS YEAR.

THE OFFICIALS SAID THAT THEY EXPECTED AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ALLIANCE EARLY NEXT MONTH DEALING BOTH WITH THE QUESTION OF AMERICAN PRODUCTION OF THE WEAPON AND ITS DEPLOYMENT IN WESTERN EUROPE. THEY SAID THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR EARLY LAST WEEK, BUT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD AT THE LAST MINUTE POSTPONED A CAREFULLY DEVISED PLAN FOR MOVING AHEAD WITH THE BOMB.

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ALTHOUGH THE OFFICIALS DESCRIBED THE DELAY AS TEMPORARY, THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT HAD PROVOKED HEATED DEBATE WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATION AND HAD COMPLICATED EFFORTS BY THE ALLIANCE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE SENSITIVE ISSUE.

STALEMATE CAUSES CONCERN

THE NEUTRON BOMB HAS BEEN AT THE CENTER OF A CONTROVERSY WITHIN THE ALLIANCE FOR OVER A YEAR, WITH NEITHER THE UNITED STATES NOR ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES WILLING

TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD APPROVING IT. ALTHOUGH THE WEAPON IS STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY DEFENSE OFFICIALS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC, MR. CARTER HAS

DECLARED HIMSELF UNWILLING TO BEGIN PRODUCING IT  
UNTIL ALLIED LEADERS AGREE THAT IT WILL BE DEPLOYED  
IN WESTERN EUROPE.

THESE LEADERS, FACING CRITICISM OF THE WEAPON AT  
HOME, HAVE INSISTED THAT MR. CARTER SHOULD FIRST  
ANNOUNCE A DECISION TO BEGIN PRODUCTION. THE WEAPON,  
WHICH ACHIEVES ITS DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT BY RELEASING  
INTENSE BURSTS OF RADIATION, WOULD BE DEPLOYED  
ON SHORT-RANGE MISSILES AND ARTILLERY IN EUROPE FOR  
USE MAINLY AGAINST ARMORED COLUMNS IN THE EVENT OF  
AN ATTACK BY THE SOVIET UNION.

THE STALEMATE HAS CREATED CONCERN AMONG SEVERAL  
RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS BECAUSE THEY SEE IT  
RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION'S LEADER-  
SHIP WITHIN THE WESTERN ALLIANCE. OFFICIALS ALSO  
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BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIET UNION, IN UNDERTAKING AN  
INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO STOP THE DEPLOYMENT OF  
THE WEAPON, HAS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THIS INDECISION.

AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAVE TRIED IN RECENT MONTHS TO  
PUT TOGETHER A COMPROMISE THAT WOULD ENABLE THE  
UNITED STATES TO BEGIN PRODUCING THE NEUTRON BOMB,  
LATER THIS YEAR. OFFICIALS SAID THAT EARLIER THIS  
MONTH AN AGREEMENT WAS REACHED AT THE NORTH ATLANTIC  
TREATY ORGANIZATION HEADQUARTERS IN BRUSSELS AND WAS  
TO BE ANNOUNCED AFTER A MEETING OF ALLIANCE REPRESENTA-  
TIVES SCHEDULED FOR LAST MONDAY.

HOWEVER, THE OFFICIALS SAID, MR. CARTER VOICED DOUBTS  
OVER THE COMPROMISE AND THE MEETING WAS POSTPONED,  
ALONG WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

OFFICIALS SAID THAT UNDER THE COMPROMISE THE UNITED  
STATES WOULD IMMEDIATELY BEGIN PRODUCING THE WEAPON,  
BUT ITS DEPLOYMENT IN EUROPE WOULD BE HELD UP FOR  
TWO YEARS WHILE THE ALLIANCE TESTED MOSCOW'S REACTION  
TO LIMITING THE NEUTRON BOMB IN RETURN FOR RESTRICTIONS  
ON A NEW SOVIET NUCLEAR SYSTEM, SUCH AS THE INTER-  
MEDIATE-RANGE SS-20 MISSILE. IF THIS EFFORT AT

ARMS CONTROL FAILED, THE ALLIANCE COUNTRIES WOULD  
THEN ALLOW THE UNITED STATES TO BEGIN DEPLOYING  
THE NEUTRON BOMB ON THEIR TERRITORY.

WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT MR. CARTER'S  
DECISION NOT TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THE PLAN WAS BASED  
ON DOUBTS WHETHER THE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS WERE IN

FACT PREPARED TO ALLOW THE BOMB'S DEPLOYMENT IF  
TALKS WITH MOSCOW FAILED. MR. CARTER, THEY SAID,  
HAS ASKED FOR A STRONGER COMMITMENT FROM ALLIED  
LEADERS ON THE QUESTION BEFORE HE APPROVES THE  
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PLAN.

SOME OFFICIALS ARGUE THAT MR. CARTER'S DECISION  
WAS CORRECT AND THAT THE WHITE HOUSE SHOULD SOON  
RECEIVE THE ASSURANCES IT NEEDS TO UNDERTAKE  
PRODUCTION OF THE BOMB.

HOWEVER, OTHER OFFICIALS SAY THAT IT MAY NOT BE  
POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN PROMPTLY THE FIRM COMMITMENTS  
THAT MR. CARTER SEEMS TO REQUIRE. POINTING  
TO STRONG OPPOSITION TO THE NEUTRON BOMB VOICED  
BY THE DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER, CHRISTOPH VAN  
DER KLAUW, LATE LAST WEEK, THESE OFFICIALS CONTEND  
THAT THE NATO PLAN COULD NOW RAPIDLY FALL APART.  
END TEXT.

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